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THIRTY-FIVE REASONS

WHY I AM NOT A MEMBER OF THE EPISCOPALIAN CHURCH,

COMMONLY CALLED THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

BY GEORGE FRED. PLAYTER.

[If it be asked, Why was this Tract written? I may reply by first asking, Why are Tracts by the Episcopalian party written? The spirit and character of the letter towards non-Episcopalian Churches caused the present publication. In newspapers, in magazines, in reviews, as well as in tracts, and I should not forget the pulpit, those out of the Episcopalian Church are incessantly urged to enter it, and unchristianized for refusing. If there were no obstacles in the path, we would hearken to our Episcopalian brethren, and appoint a day when we would all move, *en masse*, into the Establishment, and become one flock having one fold and one Shepherd. But important reasons deter thousands and tens of thousands from doing so at present. Some of those reasons are furnished by the following pages.]

I. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because the *temporal head* of that church is the Sovereign of the Realm. Yet I have no desire against my Sovereign, but wish her every good, and the possession of every right and every privilege granted by the constitution, with this exception—the Sovereignty of the church of Christ. If any have the headship of the church on earth, it must be those who are the shepherds of the fold, and who are to ‘feed the flock of God;’ yet even these are not ‘lords over God’s heritage,’ and have no ‘dominion over’ its ‘faith.’ Nor can the body have two heads, else the church were a monstrosity. The title ‘head of the church’ can be given neither to the Apostle Peter, the Roman Pontiff, nor to the Queen of England. I therefore can not become connected with a church that suffers the sovereignty of Christ to be shared, and his purchased right to be invaded. ‘*ONE Lord, one faith, one baptism.*’ And that one Lord is ‘*the HEAD over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.*’

II. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because the *authority* of appointing the head ministers of the church is in other hands than the church. The election of bishops originally was in the people composing the christian church, and afterwards in the presbyters; but now in England the election is entirely in the hands of the Sovereign of the Realm. True, there

is the shadow of power in the church, for the Sovereign, on the decease of a bishop or archbishop, issues the letter *congé d'élire*, permitting and commanding the chapter to elect for the vacancy. But the letter missive, containing the name of the successor, whom the Sovereign wills to be elected, accompanies it; and for the chapter to depart from the royal will, and to elect another, is to incur the penalties of a præmunire, including forfeiture of goods, outlawry, and other evils. Thus the title 'head of the church' possessed by the Sovereign is not a mere name, but is significant of real and large power possessed, and that power is frequently used, by improper advice, for the attaining of political rather than religious ends, as it may suit the views of the Lord Chancellor or the other Cabinet Ministers. In the Episcopal Church of Ireland, and I believe in the Colonies also, there is not even a shadow of power in the church; for the bishopric is an entire donation, and comes, by letters-patent, from the Sovereign. In one lay person dwells power sufficient to place in the highest spiritual offices 66 men; viz., 2 as archbishops of England, 25 as bishops of the dioceses in England, 2 as archbishops of Ireland, 13 as bishops of dioceses in Ireland, 6 as bishops of dioceses in Scotland, and 16 as bishops in the different Colonies; and whether these men are learned or ignorant, pious or immoral fathers in spiritual attainments or little children, is of no importance—for there is no appeal, and no remedy. 'Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.'

III. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because the *Titles* of the chief of the clergy show a departure too far from christian simplicity, and a resemblance too near to popish pomp and folly. The bishop's title is *The Right Reverend Father in God*, and that of the archbishop's is *His Grace the Most Reverend Father in God*. The common title is *My Lord*. Over whom is the bishop of the Episcopalian Church a lord? 'Over God's heritage'? Then St. Peter reproves him, and declares that such he ought not to be. It does not seem very apostolical for the Archdeacon, prior to the ordination, to cry out in the full church,—'*Reverend Father in God*, (to the bishop) I present unto you these persons present, to be admitted to the order of priesthood'; or for the bishop, bringing up the new bishop, to say aloud to the archbishop, '*Most Reverend Father in God*, we present unto you this godly and well-beloved man to be ordained and consecrated a Bishop'; for no such titles are in the Scriptures, nor found among the clergy of the first ages. These arrogant and pompous names are akin to idolatry, and unbecoming humble and spiritual men, as bishops ought to be. Protestants who condemn the 'man of sin,' 'the son of perdition,' for exalting 'himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped,' not only in power but also in title, are especially to blame. The splendid titles of the head clergy of the church have lately presented themselves rather singu-

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larly to the attention of the plain people of Upper Canada. We have been rather astounded at hearing of the Petition of the *Right Reverend the Lord Bishop* of Toronto, and of the Memorial of John, by *Divine Permission, Bishop* of the aforesaid city. 'Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles: in so doing my Maker would soon take me away.'

IV. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because of the large and unsuitable *emoluments* bestowed on and received by most of the bishops of the church. The revenues of the various English and Welsh bishops are as follows,—and the account is from the Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Ecclesiastical Revenues of England and Wales, and published in 1835 :

	Net income.		Net income.
CANTERBURY	£19,182	Lincoln	£4,542
London	13,929	Llandaff	924
Winchester	11,151	Norwich	5,395
St. Asaph	6,301	Oxford	2,648
Bangor	4,464	Peterborough	3,103
Bath and Wells	5,946	Rochester	1,459
Bristol	2,351	Salisbury	3,939
Chichester	4,229	Worcester	6,569
St. Davids	1,897		
Ely	11,105	YORK	12,629
Exeter	2,713	Durham	19,066
Gloucester	2,282	Carlisle	2,213
Hereford	2,516	Chester	3,261
Lichfield and Coventry	3,923	Sodor and Man	2,555

Here is £159,482 divided among 27 officers of the church, being, on an average, £5,536 10s. each man. Surely, on the article of income, there is no resemblance to the apostles. If this property belong to the church, the church should improve the talent, and not cast it away. To waste so much money, when it might be applied to the promotion of the glory of God by the propagation of the Gospel in pagan lands, and when the want of money is the great hindrance to the furtherance of the truth, is iniquity, and cannot be justified. Yet I blame not the men who receive the incomes, so much as the church which bestows them; and hope that the men use better their talent than the church which so profusely shares it among them. 'I will not be burdensome to you; for I seek not yours, but you.'

V. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because I cannot approve of spiritual men meddling needlessly in *civil affairs*. The bishops of the church taking seats in the House of Lords, and arguing and voting on all kinds of secular questions, is an impropriety against the religious offices which they fill. As the Roman state got on very well without the interference of the apostles or their immediate successors, and as the church prospered in Rome for 300 years without the emperors, and in the colonies without the assistance of the proconsuls; so the British senate and churches would suffer no loss, if the bishops should withdraw from

the former, and the sovereign from the control of the latter. *'Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world.'*

VI. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because I dislike the system of the induction of ministers by *Patronage*. The congregations which hear and pay the minister have no voice in the choice of the minister, so that he may or may not be acceptable and profitable. As the Sovereign is the great patron of the bishoprics, so the patronage of the rectories of the parishes is also removed from the church, and is shared among several classes of persons. The following is a synopsis showing the classes possessing the ecclesiastical patronage of the country, and to what extent :

	Benefices or Livings.
The Crown,	952
Archbishops and Bishops,	1248
Deans and Chapters, or Ecclesiastical Corporations,	787
Dignitaries and other Ecclesiastical Corporations,	1851
Universities, Colleges, & Hospitals, not Ecclesiastical,	721
Private Owners,	5098
Municipal Corporations,	53
Total,	10,708

The table is not precisely correct, for there are 11,077 parishes, and of course as many benefices or livings ; but it is correct enough for the purpose. About half of the benefices forms advowsons possessed by private persons, and the other half is nearly shared by the Sovereign and the officers of the church ; and the poor people, who should have all, have nothing to do in the matter. Here we see how effectually the inferior clergy are under the power of the bishops and the crown, and how subservient they must be to the private patrons in order to obtain a livelihood. The people must hear and pay the patron's minister, and not their own. Rather than encourage such a system, or bear the evils of it, I have no connexion with a church that patiently endures it, or perhaps willingly nurtures it. *'What,'* says Simpson, *'can be more inimical to the interests of the Gospel of Christ in the world than the damnable monopoly of church livings, so extensively common among all the higher orders of the clergy in this country ?' 'Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.'*

VII. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because the practice of *Pluralities*, or of a minister holding more livings than one, is common in the church. Not only is there a monopoly of advowsons, or of the right of presentation to livings, but there is also a frequent monopoly of the livings, one man often having several livings ; and obtained not for the sake of increased work in the salvation of souls, but for the sake of the incomes attached to those livings. And although there is a great readiness to undertake more spiritual work than can be performed by the immediate person, yet there is a still greater readiness to receive the incomes for which the party personally has performed nothing. A

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clergyman may have a living on which he resides, and it may produce £500 a-year. Another living worth £500 more may have been given by will, or in another way, by a friend, or a bishop, or a relation, or the crown. And he may have bought another for £5,000 or £7,000, bringing him in £300 a-year. Besides this, he may hold the situation of a Prebendary in one of the cathedrals, worth £500 more. In fact he may have as many livings as he can in any way obtain. Even in the Province of Canada the iniquitous practice is begun. He who is called Lord Bishop of Montreal is, in the first place, the said Lord Bishop; in the second place, he is Archdeacon of Quebec; and, in the third place, he is the Rector of Quebec. And he who is called Lord Bishop of Toronto is, first, the said Lord Bishop; secondly, Archdeacon of York; and, thirdly, Rector of the City of Toronto. Why three offices to one man? Because three salaries are connected with the three offices. But no doubt the work is rightly performed; for the bishop, being so close to the other two officers, will take care that the archdeacon looks well to his vocation; and woe be to the rector if the bishop catch him sleeping at his post! The power of presentation in Canada is, I believe, entirely in the hands of the two bishops; and therefore, as they have presented themselves with two offices each, they might see fit to present themselves with, or, technically speaking, *collate* themselves to, other well-paying benefices. *'Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully.'*

VIII. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because I dislike the system of *Curacy*, or ministers or ambassadors of Christ performing their work by proxy. When a man has a number of livings, he cannot of course live in them all; nor can he perform divine service in five or six parishes in one day, even supposing the parishes were contiguous; he must therefore hire some brethren of the church to take his pulpits and perform his duties. Also, when a man is incapable, because not a minister, he must employ a minister, and thus the layman and the clergyman share the living,—the one for doing nothing, and the other for doing all. There are many lay-impropriators who have the sole right to the incomes of parishes; and who have only to make a bargain with some spiritual person, and have the spiritual duties run over, when they receive the tithes, having performed the only condition necessary. Again, a minister may have lost his taste for reading prayers and reading sermons so often, if he ever had such, and he may resolve to give up the employment; but he cannot think of relinquishing the tithes. So he hires a curate, and the cheaper the better, who undertakes the rector's work, and receives a moiety of the reward. Curates are wanted for incapable laymen, and for monopolising and lazy clergymen. The system of curacy is woven into the constitution of the Episcopalian Church, and is made necessary by the holding of sinecure rectories. The following, from a Parliamentary return to the House of Commons in 1884, and partly

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from the Report of the Commissioners inquiring into the Ecclesiastical Revenues of England and Wales, and published June, 1835, will show the abomination pretty fully :—

Dioceſes.	No. of Benefices.	Gross amount of Income from each Dioceſe.	No. of Curates employed.	Am't of Stipends to Curates.
St. Aſaph,	143	£42,592	43	£3,564
Bangor,	123	35,064	61	4,928
Bath and Wells,	430	130,310	231	18,578
Bristol,	253	77,056	133	10,668
Canterbury,	346	123,946	174	14,656
Carlisle,	124	23,487	44	3,684
Chester,	630	169,495	267	23,239
Chicheſter,	267	82,673	122	9,440
St. David,	409	60,653	207	11,464
Durham,	192	74,457	98	8,556
Ely,	150	56,495	75	6,583
Exeter,	613	194,181	323	26,759
Glouceſter,	283	81,552	143	11,405
Hereford,	321	93,552	157	12,995
Llandaff,	192	36,347	113	6,749
Lichfield and Coventry,	610	170,104	307	24,948
Lincoln,	1,251	373,976	629	48,347
London,	640	267,742	351	35,118
Norwich,	1,026	331,750	521	38,510
Oxford,	196	51,395	103	7,954
Peterborough,	293	98,381	139	11,266
Rochester,	94	44,565	60	6,551
Salisbury,	398	134,255	223	18,174
Wincheſter,	419	153,995	202	19,858
Worceſter,	223	73,255	111	9,002
York,	891	223,220	390	29,553

The total number of benefices is 10,718, and the total number of curacies is 5,227; which shows that about one-half of the working clergy are rectors, and the other half are curates, and that there are more than 5,000 lay-impropriators and slothful clergymen, and clergymen holding pluralities, living on the fruits of the working clergy. *'But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden.'*

IX. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because I cannot on any ground, or in any way, sanction the abominable practice of *Simony*, or the buying and selling of ecclesiastical benefices or livings. Although *Simony* is formally prohibited in the Episcopalian Church, which declares it a 'detestable crime and execrable before God,' yet it is well known that the trafficking in ecclesiastical preferment is extensively pursued, and therefore must certainly be winked at by those who should condemn and destroy it. If the sale of spiritual functions is prohibited, and an incumbent is prevented from relinquishing or exchanging a benefice with cure of souls for money, yet an *Advowson*, or the right of presenting a person to a vacant benefice, is a lawful marketable commodity, and a commodity often advertised for sale.*

Whoever purchases the advowson

* The two following announcements are from a late number of the *London Times*. The first, it will be noticed, is in every way an advantageous investment, and will afford an exceedingly desirable living to some successor of the Apostles:—

CHURCH PREFERMENT.—To be sold, by private contract, the next Presentation and Perpetual Advowson of a Living, in the county of Devon, the tithes of

Ecclesi-
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can place any man, with the sanction of the bishop, in the living, no matter whether fit for the work of an ambassador of Christ or unfit. In the bargaining for advowsons there is often an over-estimate, as well as an under-rating, of the pecuniary advantages of the rectory or vicarage, and no small share of craft and dishonesty as in other bargains. And, amidst all the bargaining, the souls of the people is a subject of but little thought, as if it were most foreign from the contract. *'Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.'*

X. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because of the very unequal and unfair division of the *Incomes* of the church among the clergy, some possessing too much and others too little. The whole gross yearly amount accruing to the benefices of England and Wales is £3,254,150, independent of the incomes of the bishops, and the numerous officers connected with the cathedrals; and the total net income is £3,055,451. Dividing the net income among the total benefices makes an average of £244 to each incumbent or minister: an amount that merits no complaint. But the complaint, not of the average, is of the inequality, of the incomes; and which inequality will appear from the following table:—

Of the 10,718 benefices,—		800 have incomes from £400 to £500	
297	have incomes under £50	954	“ 500 “ 750
1629	have incomes from 50 to £100	323	“ 750 “ 1000
1602	“ 100 “ 150	134	“ 1000 “ 1500
1354	“ 150 “ 200	32	“ 1500 “ 2000
1979	“ 200 “ 300	18	“ 2000 and upwards.
1326	“ 300 “ 400		

The whole amount paid to 5,227 curates is £424,549 yearly, averaging £81 each. The church deals unfairly and unjustly with her revenues and with her servants. *'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.'*

XI. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because I hate the system of compulsory *Tithes* for the support of the clergy. I have no objection to the Government paying the heads of the sect it patronizes, and creating funds for that purpose, so that the funds do not come from the whole people, but only from that part of them who approve of and are benefited by the ministers of the favoured sect. Whether the funds come by tithes, or taxes, or by voluntary contributions, if they come from that part of the people, and that part only, it would be a matter of no concern to me. But when the largest portion of the population is compelled to pay tithes, or other valuables in lieu, to the ministers of

which are commuted at £725 per annum, with a considerable portion of glebe, valued at £200 per annum, together with a parsonage-house, good garden, and offices. The present incumbent is now about the age of seventy-five years, and a lease of the tithes for his life will be assigned over to the purchaser.

'Advowson.—To be sold by auction, early in the spring, if not sooner disposed of by private contract, the Advowson and Next Presentation of a most desirable Benefice, close to Barnstaple, North Devon, of the annual value of about £500, with a new and excellent house, and glebe of 100 acres, beautifully situate. The present incumbent is nearly in the fifty-fifth year of his age. A considerable part of the purchase-money may remain on mortgage.'

a sect for which a part feels entire indifference, and another part utter abhorrence, there is abundant reason for objection. The compulsory payment of tithes by the whole people is a great curtailment of the liberties of Britons, and is a great set-off against our boasted privileges. The church that nurtures herself by the present compulsory system, and that gladly approves of such a system, must have me without rather than within her pale and jurisdiction.

XII. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because there is too frequently found a want of that kind and degree of spiritual knowledge and ability among the ministers, necessary for the enlightening of the ignorant, the regeneration of those 'under the law,' and the sanctification of those 'under grace.' It is a well-known fact, that the enlightened sinner, 'occupied partly with sorrow and heaviness, partly with an earnest desire to be delivered from the danger of hell and damnation,' (Homily of Fasting,) meets usually with little satisfaction by consulting the successors of the holy Apostles; and therefore, if enlightened in their church—which, however, is not common—usually leaves it, and applies to pastors of more spiritual discernment, and of more evangelical knowledge. The fact is not only well known, but it is even complained of by the ministers who are left by these persons. Such ministers know still less of the manner of feeding 'the flock of God,' and of furthering the 'life of God in the soul of man. The evangelical part of the clergy is of course an exception to the charge; but that part forms but a small minority of the whole. As the clergy generally were ignorant of the essential doctrines requisite for the formation and growth of personal piety and devotion to God in the times of John Wesley and George Whitefield, so there is no proof to the contrary but that they remain the same to the present day. A man who desires to flee from the wrath to come runs no little risk of being defeated in his end, should he place himself in that fold of which such shepherds are the guides and feeders. *'Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar: Say unto them which daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall: there shall be an overflowing shower; and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall rend it.'*

XIII. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because there is great cause for fearing that, however moral, a large body of the ministers are destitute of that 'peace of God which passeth all understanding,' which is derivable only from a state of favour with God and regeneration of heart. It is true that the bishop, in the form of ordination, says of each on whose head his hand hath fallen, 'We, solemnly administering holy orders under the protection of the Almighty, did admit our *beloved in Christ*, (of whose virtuous and *pious* life and conversation, and competent learning and knowledge in the Holy Scriptures, we were well assured)

into the holy order of priest.' Yet there is too much evidence known to prevent our believing that every man ordained a priest or deacon was 'beloved in Christ,' or led a 'pious life.' The very predicament of the deacon or priest has too often been the very state of the minister's ordinary or bishop. Where there is a want of personal piety in a minister, there can be but little hope of success in the ministry. There should be conversion in the priest, before we can expect conversion in the people. '*Physician, heal thyself.*'

XIV. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because a large number of the ministers are not only destitute of piety, but actually exhibit unbecoming and indecent manners.— Who would expect to find

'A cassock'd huntsman and a fiddling priest?'

And yet they may be found. Well,

'Strike up the fiddles, let us all be gay,
Laymen have leave to dance if parsons play.'

And who would expect to find clergymen encircling the gambling-table, and shuffling the cards, or moving the figures of a chess-board? or in the pit or the boxes of a theatre, and clapping their hands and crying 'encore,' 'encore!' with the rabble? or throwing the bowl in the skittle-alley of an inn? or on the race-course with the coarsest of the people? But I proceed no farther; and cry shame on the men who compel the exposure of the cloth! Shame on the bishops who permit such manners! The men delighting in these carnal and worldly pursuits must be very unfit for the holy and spiritual exercises of the pulpit and desk. And the church permitting such conduct in her ministers must needs separate devout persons from her communion, or deter them from entering her precincts. '*Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.*'

XV. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because of the general want of *preaching qualifications* in the clergy. It is true that the bishop gives each of the ordained license to become a public preacher, saying, 'We, being duly certified of your morals, learning, and knowledge in the Holy Scriptures, give and grant to you our license and faculty to preach and expound the Word of God, and to be a public preacher in and throughout our diocese; you having first taken the oaths of allegiance and supremacy to Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and of renouncing all foreign jurisdiction, according to an act of Parliament in that behalf provided; and also to pay true and canonical obedience to us, and our successors, bishop of ———; and having subscribed to the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England, and to the three articles in the thirty-sixth canon.' And yet who among the clergy is a public preacher? who is anything more than a public reader? As the Preface to the Homilies declared in 1562, so we find it still, 'All they which are appointed ministers have not the gift of preaching sufficiently to instruct the people which is committed unto them.'

To remedy the inconvenience, the homilies were written, and required to be read by the incapable ministers. So, in the present day, able writers advertise their services to write sermons of all sorts for those who can not or will not compose their own discourses; and the newspapers are public witnesses of the deficiency of ministers, and the remedy to which they apply. Reading instead of preaching sermons is a bane of the Episcopalian Church, and a resort most unbecoming the successors of the Apostles. Surely no one will urge that reading is preaching; for this would make every reader of a sermon a preacher, which is an absurdity. If all the incapables were removed from the benefices of the Established Church, I am afraid that hardly as many would be left as departed from it on the passing of the memorable Bartholomew Act, the Act of Uniformity, in 1662. Surely the 'dumb' ministers (as the Scriptures term them) had better depart from their present vocations, and betake themselves to occupations more suitable to their abilities. 'Many a man has run his head against the pulpit,' says South, 'who would have cut an excellent figure at a plough-tail.' Dissenting ministers are charged with various deficiencies by the apostolical ministers; but, whatever deficiencies they possess, they cannot be charged with being 'dumb.' Surely the unconverted, the immoral, and the dumb are the 'sham' ministers; and not the pious, virtuous, and eloquent men who ornament the pulpits of the non-conformists, and are the praise of the churches of Christ. Those whom Christ selects as ambassadors are qualified not only by character and life, but by talents; and those destitute of abilities, suitable and sufficient, are proved intruders into the office, no matter by what earthly authority they may have entered it. *'I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.'*

XVI. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because I cannot learn that such *success* attends the ministry of the Gospel in the government church as I find in the churches of the non-conformists or dissenters. The public preaching of the Gospel is a means towards an end; and wherever the end is most frequently attained, there must be used the most appropriate means. The end of the Gospel is to bring a sinful world to repentance of sin, and to faith in a crucified Christ; and also to bring the believing church to that holiness without which no man can see the Lord. Now this end, it is well known, is often attained in some churches and by some ministers, and very seldom in our ancient Gothic buildings, and by our modern apostolicals. Now I am for those ministers who preach most successfully the unsearchable riches of Christ, and for those churches to which those ministers belong. That body of ministers which through grace saves the most sinners from sin is superior to all others, just as that physician is above all his brethren who effects more cures than any of them. 'Let the clergy live more holily, pray more fervently, preach more heavenly, and labour more diligently than the Methodist ministers appear to do,' says a pious

minister of the establishment; 'then will christians flock to the churches to hear us, as they now flock to the meetings to hear them.' If I frequent the churches where the end of the Gospel is seldom attained, possibly I may never be cured. I will then go to those physicians who, by the frequency of their cures, prove that they are the best physicians. *'But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings.'*

XVII. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because a certain kind of extemporaneous public prayer is discouraged, and in some dioceses prohibited. What are termed prayer-meetings, or meetings for prayer and singing of hymns, and in common usage among Protestant Nonconformists, have but little countenance from a few of the bishops, and rectors, and curates; and none at all from the great majority of the Episcopal clergy. Now, as I find no opposition to them in the Scriptures, but rather much encouragement; as I have been for many years accustomed to them, and have found spiritual profit by them, as well as other persons; and as I am afraid that, were I to unite with a church which possesses no such ordinances, I should be in danger of losing what little spiritual desire I may possess, and thus endanger my best interests; I dare not but remain as I am, unconnected with the church of the rich and the noble, and encircled in a fold where more spiritual advantages are possessed, although where less form, and pomp, and pretension are found. *'And when he had thus spoken,'* Paul *'kneeled down, and prayed with them all.'* *'And we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.'*

XVIII. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because, though the Apostles' creed speaks of 'the communion of saints,' yet I find little or nothing that can be called 'the communion of saints' in that church, whilst in some other churches the thing is possessed, and the members partake of it. There is the shadow of the communion of saints in the assembling of the pious to partake of the Supper of the Lord; and in some congregations, over which there are spiritual ministers, there may be even the substance. There is possessed by the devout a 'fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ,' and a 'fellowship one with another;' but, while all the devout possess the former, all do not possess the latter fellowship; and, among those who have little or nothing of it, are the pious of the Episcopalian Church. But it is eminently possessed by the Methodist Church, and three of its institutions have the creation and growth of it for their chief end; and other Nonconformist bodies have it. *'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.'*

XIX. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England,

because, had I been ever so much disposed, yet I could never learn the way. And, were I ever so strongly inclined, I still am as ignorant as ever as to where is the door, and who is the person to open it. I know that, in Nonconformist churches, a person without must become something, and do something, in order to membership; but what I must become, and what I must do, to become a member of the Episcopalian Church, or whether I need become anything, or need do anything, I know not; or in what membership consists, I am entirely ignorant. I have gone through the Liturgy, have read the Articles, have ransacked the Homilies, and have made various inquiries, but no satisfaction have I obtained; and whether the bishops and the clergy themselves know, is that point of which I am rather doubtful. If any one will point me out the door of the church, then I will point it out to others who may inquire. The church now seems to me an open common, having no fence and no gate, so that any horse may graze on it, both the horse who has his own pasture-field and the horse who has none, and the one has as much right as the other; *i. e.* the Dissenter may also be a member of the Establishment. *And all that believed were together.'*

XX. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because, as I know of no formal way of getting into the church, so I know of no orderly way of getting out. Had the church a front-door, opening inwards and outwards, allowing ingress and egress, I think that I should have known it; and as I have never heard of it, I am disposed to take it for granted that there is no door, and that if a person wants to enter, or to depart, he must creep in or creep out through whatever hole he may find, just as people do when a house is on fire. In plain terms, my meaning is, that there is no such thing as a godly discipline in the church, neither among the ministers nor among the people. True, the bishop may expel an immoral minister, but the thing is rarely done; and when done, it is usually after an extreme delay. There is also some provision made in the preface to the service of the Holy Communion to retard an 'evil liver' from the table, until his 'naughty life' 'be amended.' But ministers of the stamp which I have described in paragraphs numbered xiii., xiv., and xv., will care but little who comes to the table, and who does not; and those kind of ministers form, I fear, the largest number of the whole. Well-constituted churches have the conditions of entrance and of continuance; and, when those conditions are violated, the authorised minister proceeds to the excision of the unsound branch from the healthy trunk: but the practice has not obtained in the Episcopal church of the realm; and the want of it is a serious objection to any right-minded person uniting with, and an important obstacle to the progress of piety in, that church. Who are the members of the Episcopalian church? Are all members who attend the public services of the church? Then the membership is a strange medley

of good, bad, and indifferent. If not, what part of the congregation forms the membership of the church? I wish some one would give the public the information, for the public seems entirely in the dark. When we find out what is the membership of the church, then we shall easily know the persons over whom the jurisdiction of the minister may be exercised, and whom he may continue as member, and whom he may expel. *'A man that is an heretick, after the first and second admonition, reject.'*

XXI. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because it is uncertain what are the standard *doctrines* of the church. The proof is, that there are ministers of various belief, and who preach a variety of doctrines, in the church; and yet all profess that the doctrines taught are the doctrines of the church, and agreeable to the thirty-nine articles which they have subscribed, and to the homilies which they receive. The 17th article, for instance, wears the aspect of Calvin; and yet, there are not a few who regard it, looking also at other parts of the liturgy, as Arminian. Lord Chatham, in the House of Lords, once said, 'We have a Popish liturgy, a Calvinistic creed, and an Arminian clergy.' I wish to belong to no church whose doctrine is undefined, and whose ministers preach other and contrary doctrine; but I wish membership rather with that church whose belief is easily ascertained, and which faith is preached alike in all her pulpits, as is the case with the generality of the churches of the Nonconformists. *'Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.'*

XXII. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because of the objectionable parts to be found in the *Liturgy*.—First, I object to the general ground on which the book of Common Prayer goes, viz. that the congregations are wholly formed of persons who are believers and children of God. Public assemblies, whether in the court or in the church, are formed of persons of various classes of character; and a formulary of religious worship should be appropriate, not to one class alone, but to all classes. To make it suitable to one class only, is to benefit that class only; and thus others are neglected, or else are led into mistake, viz. to imagine themselves as belonging to that one class. The rule among divines, requiring them to classify their hearers, in the application of their sermons, is a rule which should be observed by all framers of liturgies, or persons conducting divine worship. Now, it frequently happens, that the desk regards the congregation as saints, and the pulpit as a mixture of saints and sinners; and then, the desk and pulpit being in opposition, the congregation is divided, some siding with the pulpit, but the self-approving majority hails the decision of the desk. In other cases, the adulatory strain of the desk is echoed back to the congregation by the pulpit; and both together aid in wrapping in delusion the people too willing to think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. *'Know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God.'*

XXIII. Secondly, I object to parts of the service of the public Baptism of Infants. The following are some of the particulars:—

1. 'We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock, and do sign him with the sign of the cross.' [Here the priest shall make a cross upon the forehead of the child.]—Where is the utility of this Popish signature?

2. 'Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ's church.'—Where is the proof? Again, 'We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit.'

3. 'Note.—That there shall be for every male child to be baptized, two godfathers and one godmother; and, for every female, one godfather and two godmothers.'—Where is the use of these persons?

4. 'Dost thou, in the name of this child, renounce the devil and all his works, the vain glory and pomp of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow, nor be led by them?' 'I renounce them all,' i. e., for the child, and perhaps had not yet renounced them for him or herself. But, supposing the latter done, yet, with all the explanation afforded, it is yet unexplained how the former can be done.

XXIV. Thirdly, I object to a part of the Catechism.

'Who gave you this name?'
'My godfathers and godmothers, in my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.' The proof?

XXV. Fourthly, I object to the form of Absolution, in the service of the Visitation of the Sick, as savouring too much of Popery.
'I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'—If the priest here profess to forgive sins, is it not blasphemy? If he do not, is it not folly, and even worse, to use words which may deceive the unwary? 'Why doth this man thus speak blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God only?'

XXVI. Fifthly, the order of Confirmation is objectionable.

1. 'Do ye here, in the presence of God and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your Baptism?' Before a covenant is renewed, it must be first made; and the proof is yet to be found that the promise of the sponsors (however good in itself) is binding on other than themselves.

2. 'Almighty and everlasting God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins.' If all the young people who come to confirmation had regeneration and forgiveness, how is the priest or bishop to know it? If they have not, what an untruth does the bishop declare!

3. 'We make our humble supplications unto thee for these thy servants, upon whom (after the example of thy holy Apostles) we have now laid our hands, to certify to them (by this sign) thy favour and gracious goodness towards them.' Where is it learned that the Apostles ever practised such a ceremony as that of confirmation by this church? Surely it is not in the New Testament. Where is it learned that the hands of a bishop can certify to a sinner the favour of God? The whole ceremony of modern confirmation, as well as the system of godfathers and godmothers going before it, can hardly have a defence, and is open to constant attack, from reason or from ridicule. 'And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.'

XXVII. Sixthly, the ceremony of the Ring in the form of the solemnization of Matrimony is an old objection, but as strong as ever.

'With this ring I thee wed, and with my body I thee worship.'
If the word 'worship' signify here adoration, the act is idolatrous; and if it do not, why is it retained? why is not a better word substituted? 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me.'

XXVIII. Seventhly, the repetitions in the Sunday morning's service are very tiresome and blameable.

The Lord's prayer is repeated every Sunday morning five times, and on Sacramental days six; and should the services for Baptism and Churching of Women occur (both of which are appointed to be read during public worship) the prayer will be repeated no less than eight times in one continued service. By the same appointment, two distinct prayers are offered up for the Sovereign, two Creeds are recited, the Collect for the day is twice read, and the Gloria Patri is eight and occasionally ten times repeated. *'When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do.'*

XXIX. Eighthly, the order for the *Burial of the Dead* has a very objectionable clause.

No matter if the deceased person have been a stage-player, a prostitute, a thief, or a murderer, and continued in an evil course till the time of death, the minister must declare that the body is committed 'to the ground' 'in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.' As in the book of Common Prayer generally, so, in this part of it, there is no distinguishment of character, but all are taken to be of the proper life and conduct. *'All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; THEY THAT HAVE DONE GOOD, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.'*

XXX. Ninthly, I can find no sufficient reason for still observing the service of the Fifth of November, in relation to the *Gunpowder Treason Plot*.

The observance is of no important use to those observing it; and to a large body of the people it is a source of yearly irritation. The times of James 1st and the present days are very diverse, especially with regard to religious toleration; and what might formerly be excused, can now meet with no apology. The nation has had other and as great deliverances as that of the fifth of November; and if the one be celebrated by a yearly anniversary, why not the other? *'Follow peace with all men.'*

XXXI. Tenthly, I entirely object to the service of the Thirtieth of January, 'being,' the Prayer Book says, 'the day of the *Martyrdom of the blessed King Charles.*'

The object of the service is 'to implore the mercy of God' that 'the guilt of that sacred and innocent blood' 'may not at any time hereafter be visited upon us or our posterity.' The cruel death of Charles 1st is an event which every lover of his country's fame will lament; but that this 'blessed king' was innocent of misgovernment, and of bringing so heavy a catastrophe on himself, is not certain, and therefore the words 'innocent blood' are not altogether in place. His condemnation and death were not for a defence of the Christian religion, but for the misgovernment of the nation; and therefore, how can his death be called a martyrdom? If it be fit that the death of this prince be yearly celebrated, why not also have a service in the prayer book for the murder or 'martyrdom' of Edward 2d, of Richard 2d, and of Henry 6th?

XXXII. Eleventhly, I can see no necessity for the service of the Twenty-ninth of May, celebrating the *Restoration of Charles II.* to the throne, after the cessation of the Commonwealth.

It is a practice obligatory by act of Parliament, passed in the 13th year of Charles' reign; but had the act been deferred until his decease, the practice would perhaps never have been compelled. Surely the memory of Charles 2d is not so grateful to the English nation as the service of the prayer book seems to imply; for though the Restoration ended some troubles in the nation, it became the source of many others. It may even be said that the injury true religion got in the reign of that despotic and dissolute prince, is not yet entirely healed.

XXXIII. Twelfthly, I cannot agree with the bishop when he is 'ordering of priests,' or with the archbishop when he is consecrating a bishop.

The former says to the priest, having on his head the hands, *'Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained.'* The latter says to the bishop, *'Receive the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of a bishop in the Church of God.'* If the same power were in our Episcopalian bishops as was in

the Saviour and his holy Apostles, they might well say, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost;' but when no such power is possessed, the use of such authoritative expressions is only mockery. The authority bestowed to forgive sins, is also a shadow without the substance.

XXXIV. I am not, and cannot be, a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because she will not say, 'Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.' The efforts made to compel religious uniformity in the nation, from the time of Queen Elizabeth and the High Commission Court to the present day, have signally failed. Millions of Roman Catholics are still on the one hand of the Government church, and millions of Protestant Nonconformists are on the other. The same line of things exists as in the days of Elizabeth and the Stuarts, only that the adherents of the Nonconformists are more numerous than ever. The Government church is still encroached on, on both hands; and there seems nothing impossible in the prospect of her being ultimately swallowed up by both. The conduct of the Episcopalian Church officers, both in Parliament and out, has been usually very severe towards Protestant Dissenters, and an ignoble and petty persecution still goes on. *'For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.'*

XXXV. I am not a member of the Episcopal Church of England, because of the strong tide of Popish principles and practices flowing into the church during the last ten years. The Puseyite doctrines and manners are now so well known by the community, and are so frequently stated by the watchful press, that I need not enter into particulars in this place. The liturgy was Popish enough for any half-Protestant before the late rise of Puseyism, and the mass-book and prayer-book were then far from being opposites; but now unchanged Popery stands firm, and the Episcopalian Church is veering towards it, getting farther than ever from the borders of the Protestant bodies of the nation,—and soon, if Providence interpose not, will the Roman and the Anglican churches join and embrace. *'Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away.'*

From the preceding pages the Episcopalian ministers, and others, now know, at least in part, if ignorant before, why it is that Dissenters are Dissenters; and why, although so frequently entreated, and even goaded, they do not enter the Episcopalian Church. It is not because they hate what is good in the Church, but because they abhor what is bad. A certain Bishop of Derry declared that he found no less than six hundred gross errors in the system of Popery. Now I do not believe that so many errors are resident in the Episcopalian Church; but there are errors in it, and they are more numerous than many even imagine. And, while so many remain, it is useless further to entreat, or seek to compel, a membership in a Church which makes no effort to change an evil practice, or to rectify an erroneous belief. First, cleanse the temple, purify the priests; and then the Nonconformist Churches will hear what their Episcopalian brethren have to say.